

Local Agency Conference Call March 5, 2014

Broadwater ✓, Cascade ✓, Custer ✓, Dawson □, Deer Lodge ✓, Fergus ✓, Flathead ✓, Gallatin ✓, Hill ✓, Lake ✓, Lewis and Clark ✓, Lincoln ✓, Missoula ✓, Ravalli ✓, Riverstone ✓, Sanders ✓, Sheridan ✓, Silver Bow ✓, Teton ✓, Valley ✓, Fort Peck □, Northern Cheyenne ✓, Blackfeet ✓, Crow □, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes ✓, Fort Belknap ✓, Rocky Boy □

Present ✓, Absent □

State Staff: Joan, Leah, Kevin, Glade, Kate, Mark, Chris, Bernadette

Welcome and State Update

Joan presented updates:

- Attended Leadership conference in Washington DC this past week
- The 2014 budget is approved and we should know soon about OA requests.
- The Final Food Rule has been released, we will be reviewing it at the State and let everyone know about changes as soon as decisions are made. There are different implantation dates for different parts of the rule, so there may be a phase in.
- EBT, still working with management and SNAP/TANF as well as IT state staff to determine path forward. Our hope is that we will be only delayed about 1 year.

Abbott Formula:

- Abbott has agreed to pay rebates for Similac Total Comfort, Similac Sensitive and Similac Spit Up.
- FNS has provided clear guidance that if states choose to issue these formulas, an Rx is **required**. However, it is NOT food package 3, nor are they "exempt" formulas, so the Rx is not as strict as with other formulas.
- We have 2 options, now that we have all the information on the situation:
 - 1) Continue with current plan to phase out completely by October 1st- while allowing infants who were already on these formulas to remain on them until then if they have an Rx as of April 1st (CPA ok to approve)
 - 2) Allow all options for all participants ongoing. This would mean that as of April 1st any infant who is on Sensitive, Total Comfort or Spit Up must have an Rx on file, approved by the CPA.

- We are requesting that each agency provide us with feedback about what they prefer the plan to be. There are pros and cons to both. Mainly it is acknowledged that options are nice for participants yet the Rx mandate puts an administrative burden on the local staff and providers, and a logistical burden on participants.

Votes for option 1 (19) : Broadwater, Cascade, Custer, Fergus, Flathead, Gallatin, Hill, Lewis & Clark, Lincoln, Missoula, Ravalli, Riverstone, Sanders, Sheridan, Teton, Valley, Northern Cheyenne, Rocky Boy, Dawson

Votes for option 2 (1): Blackfeet

Torn/different opinions in clinic (4): Butte/Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, Lake, Ft. Belknap

No vote yet (3): Crow, Fort Peck, Fergus (Jane leaning option 1 but Shirley is out of town)

Other comments/concerns:

- Would like Rx to go to 1 year to decrease the paperwork at 6 months (L & C stated, others agreed)
- Re-do formula Rx to either be 1 page or at least more clear (so doctors aren't using the wrong one)
- Let retailers know what our decision will be so they can stock the formulas adequately
- Communicate with doctor's offices and hospitals better, make clear what the policy is
- Some agencies expressed that limiting the formula choice may encourage more breastfeeding
- Some agencies expressed concern that it is a confusing process and changing plans would be frustrating to participants
- Some agencies noted that parents, doctors, NICU staff, nurses, have expressed frustration with the lack of options and really want Sensitive or Total Comfort to be allowed
- Some agencies noted that participants have been upset or even dropped off program due to the change, and are concerned that participant satisfaction or participation altogether may be affected

The State staff thank you all for participating in the discussion, we will make a decision very soon and communicate what that decision will be.

Spring Meeting Agenda and Registration

- Spring Training meeting April 10 and 11 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Bozeman will be free to all WIC employees and expect around \$100 for others. 1st day will include Jodie Pfarr's

presentation of “Bridges to Poverty” and LARC training. Please register if you have not yet done so, and invite other program staff if they are interested.

Farm Direct Plans

- We are looking forward to a productive year for our Farm Direct Program. At the moment we are gearing up for our spring training for farmers on our program. To this end, training packets have been sent to our participating local agencies and we have sent reminder letters to our farmers, encouraging them to prepare for this year’s training. If any of our participating local agencies need any additional training materials we are encouraging them to get in touch with us.

State Plan

- The review and updating of the State plan for FY2015 has begun. State staff has reviewed several of the chapters so far and policy changes have been suggested and discussion is continuing. At the same time, the 2014 State Plan (conditionally approved on October 22, 2013) continues to be reviewed by the Regional office in Denver. Each section is being re-reviewed by the specialist for that section. We have responded to all questions sent thus far and are waiting to see if there will be other changes needed. When the State receives final approval (no later than March 31, 2014); the entire State Plan will be re-loaded onto the WIC website so that people may download the corrected pieces. We will keep you posted.

Retailer Survey

- Next week, we are sending out cashier surveys to all of our retailers. The topic of the survey is training; we want to know what’s working and what needs improvement. We will also ask them how well they perceive participants are trained on the food list and how to shop for WIC foods. The surveys will be mailed to the state and we will tabulate and interpret the results. We will share these results with stores and local agencies. After the cashier survey is complete, we will do more in-depth phone interviews with managers to get a high-level perspective of the WIC program in stores.

Cereal Issue

- Remember to remind participants that 9 ounce boxes of cereal are not allowed on WIC due to their high cost. We are seeing a lot of returned benefits because of this and that costs the stores a significant amount in returned check fees. Lori Stenson pointed out that this is because of prorated cereal. Please remind ALL participants, returning and new, that 9 oz. boxes of cereal are not allowed on WIC.